

# 45<sup>TH</sup> SPACE WING

## Patrick Air Force Base

by Second Lieutenant Kipp Bradley

With a 50-year history of missile and space launch operations, the 45th Space Wing has been a beacon in our nation's space exploration efforts dating back to 1949 when the Air Force assumed responsibility for the Banana River Naval Air Station. On 1 August 1950, the base was renamed Patrick Air Force Base in honor of Major General Mason M. Patrick. Thus began the development of the busiest and most important missile and space support range in the world.

The Wing's mission is to enhance national strength through assured access to space. The Eastern Range provides the nation and the world with launch services, facilities, and range assets. Our customers include Titan IV, Atlas II, Delta II, and Athena. The Wing also provides range services, aircraft operations, facilities, and base support services to NASA, the US Navy, and over 50 tenant units. To do this, we operate industrial complexes at seven locations, geographically dispersed over 7,000 miles: Patrick AFB, Cape Canaveral AFS, Kennedy Space Center, and Jonathon Dickinson Missile Tracking Annex, Florida; Ascension AAF in the South Atlantic; Antigua AS in the West Indies; and Argentia, Newfoundland. To meet these unique requirements, the Wing's Financial Management Planning, Programs, Systems, and Services are as diverse and dynamic as the mission we support.

While our budget operations may look typical, they're far from it. We have the normal program elements found at other bases (Civil Engineering, Base Operating Support, Audio-Visual, Education), but it's our unique programs that set us apart (Spacelift Range Systems and Booster Vehicle-related program elements for the Atlas, Delta, and Titan programs). Sprinkle in some payload program elements, a reimbursement program of between \$65-75 million each year, and a direct budget program averaging \$335 million annually and you begin to get a picture of a budget operation that manages over \$400 million worth of nationally critical space operations every year. However, our uniqueness doesn't end at budget operations.

Recently, we partnered with NASA in eliminating contractual redundancy for similar services (propellants, vehicles, and grounds/facilities maintenance). The Joint Base Operations Support Contract (JBOSC) was the first such contract awarded. With this paradigm shift there have been some growing pains as efforts formerly performed on individual service contracts are migrated under the JBOSC umbrella. To address these issues, two matrixed financial analysis personnel are dedicated to the Joint Performance Management Office—an agency comprised of NASA and Air Force (civilian and military) employees, physically located at Cape Canaveral AFS.

In customer support and services, "Team Patrick" again paves the way. The travel section processes 1,250 travel vouchers per month, totaling more than \$751 thousand, and ranked first in the Air Force in terms of timeliness and accuracy. The Quality Examiner manages all leave, allotments, pay entitlements, and allowances affecting over 3,000 military personnel located from the Space Coast to Puerto Rico. As you can imagine, Patrick boasts one of the largest retiree populations in the US, not to mention the winter influx of retirees in which the area's retired population grows by more than 50,000.

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—45th Space Wing Mission

Our recent accomplishments further attest that Financial Management at the world's premier launch base is never a walk on the beach. When Hurricane Floyd rumbled out of the Caribbean on a collision course with Patrick AFB in September 1999, all military and civilian personnel were evacuated from Brevard County. With less than two weeks left in the fiscal year, 4,000 orders and travel vouchers were cut (30 percent of an entire year's business), totaling more than \$1.5 million. For their effort, the voucher processing team received the 45th Space Wing Annual Team Award.

A challenge we now face is prospering and performing at higher levels of excellence in a period of shrinking resources. We continue the vision of centralizing many contractual services into several major range contracts to eliminate duplicity. Decreased funding has forced innovative methods of providing services to both DoD and non-DoD customers. As a test base for the Automated Business Service System we continue to become paperless by implementing TDY orders electronically. Also, we are immersed in full costing of the Eastern Range—bringing 2,000 personnel into the Job Order Cost Accounting System for labor, and establishing 50 new unit service rates for radar, telemetry, optics, and command stations. All this while maintaining one of the largest wildlife refuges on the Eastern seaboard at Cape Canaveral AFS. Along with species preservation, environment concerns are an everyday part of life, where we work, live, and play with the bald eagle, manatee, dolphin, and yes, the occasional alligator. Our challenges are many, but we continue to explore new and different methods to optimize the three Es: Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Environment.

The future holds the prospect of bringing in the new Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle and the development of the Cape Canaveral Spaceport. Our job is to ensure funding in our legacy booster programs transition smoothly to the EELV. Also important is our support to the Cape Canaveral Spaceport—a joint endeavor between the 45th SW, NASA, and the Spaceport Florida Authority (a state agency tasked to enhance Florida's space-related programs) enabling the Space Coast to remain the world's premier gateway to space.

As you can see, Financial Management life on the Florida Space Coast is like nowhere else in the world. From sea turtles to space launch, we account for it all.